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Article

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# Vignalis, or Guénaël, of Alderney: A Legend and its Medieval Sources<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

According to a modern legend, Saint Vignalis was the missionary who converted the people of Alderney, one of the smaller Channel Islands, in the sixth century.<sup>2</sup> It has long been suspected that this narrative was a fabrication, but until now nobody has been able to trace how a name that turns out to have been a copying error ultimately became a figure of legend. This article examines the identity of the saint in question, and traces the story of how he arrived – textually if not historically – in the island. The error, in a medieval register of bishops, resulted in the name Vignalis, which was incorrectly identified as that of Guénaël in the nineteenth century. The legend persists to this day, in spite of evidence that nobody called Vignalis came to Alderney. The possibility remains, however, that a saint with a name resembling that of Vignalis could be thought to have come, given the instability of the original ninth-century accounts of this saint's life. Copying errors that result in garbled forms of a name are not uncommon in medieval writing, as elsewhere, but the following is a remarkably elaborate and complex example.<sup>3</sup>

The modern legend dates from 1851, when Louisa Lane Clarke published a guide-book of Alderney. It featured the story of a saint who came north from the Abbey of Landévennec in Brittany to join Maglorius' mission to the Channel Islands in the sixth century. One of sixty-two companions, he travelled with Maglorius as his disciple and was sent by him from Sark (near Guernsey) to the remote island of

Alderney. Clarke's story is a very slight one, giving no further details and no indication of her sources.<sup>4</sup>

The Islands as they appear in this study are Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney ('Aurigny'), Sark ('Sercq'), and Herm; they are off the coast of what is now Normandy. The medieval bishops' register, known as the *Livre Noir de Coutances*, originally listed Herm and Sark (not Alderney) among the parishes of Guernsey; Jersey had, and still has, a separate administration. The Channel Islands are part of the British Isles (though not of the European Union), remaining part of the Kingdom after Normandy became part of France. The most important documents for this research have proved to be differing copies of the *Livre Noir*, and the rare booklet by de Gerville (see note 2) in which several pieces of evidence were collated into a coherent narrative.

## The Historical Background

### *Hagiographical*

There are five early Breton saints named in this study. Each is connected with Alderney in a different way, by ancient or modern legend, or by supposition. Each is part of a web of evidence which must be unpicked to explain the origin of the modern legend. They are as follows: Maglorius, Samson, Tugual, Winwallus, and Guénaël.<sup>5</sup> They all lived in or near the sixth century (their lives give differing accounts in some cases); most of the lives of these saints were written in or around the ninth century.

Maglorius is said to have evangelized the Channel Islands of Jersey and Sark, although there is nothing in any account of his life to say that he ever came to Alderney. The date of his death (c. 575) is fairly well established, in that accounts of it do not vary substantially. This means that any saint who is supposed to have travelled with him must be shown to belong to his generation, or a little younger.<sup>6</sup> Originally from Ireland, he first travelled with Saint Samson to Brittany.

Samson is another of the missionaries known (in legend) to have evangelized among the islands at that time. He is said to have been

given the islands by King Childebert, but Alderney was considered too remote from his abbey at Dol to be worth troubling with.<sup>7</sup>

Tugual is the saint to which the church of Herm, the smallest island of the group, is dedicated. 'Tudwal' is a likely candidate because dedications to him are widespread.<sup>8</sup> But there is no legend that any saint with a name resembling this ever visited Herm, or any of the other Channel Islands.

Winwallus was the first abbot of Landévennec, in Brittany. Dates for his life vary from one source to another, unlike those of Maglorius. Although it has been claimed that he was the patron of Alderney, because the name is not unlike that of 'Vignalis', he could never have visited the islands. At least one old guide-book, compiled later than Clarke's account but not based upon it, gives Winwallus as Alderney's patron.<sup>9</sup> The French version of his name, Guenolé, resembles the name of his successor at Landévennec; this may explain the confusion initiated by Black's Guide and others, but there is no doubt they were two separate individuals.<sup>10</sup> Because many collections of saints' lives are arranged by feast day and not alphabetically (the latter can prove problematic if a saint's name has variable spellings), it is useful to note that Winwallus' feast day is 3rd March; Guénaël's is 3rd November, should further proof be needed that the two were separate. In any case, dates for Winwallus' life vary much more than dates for Maglorius;<sup>11</sup> this means that dates for the life of his successor, necessarily extrapolated from his, are also variable.<sup>12</sup> No source makes Winwallus contemporary with Maglorius, and therefore it is unlikely that they could have travelled together. More particularly, there is nothing in any account of Winwallus' life that suggests, or even allows, any visit to the Channel Islands. As a young man he wished to travel north (from Northern Brittany) to Ireland, but he was forbidden to do so by Patrick himself in a vision: Patrick ordered him to go south to found his Abbey. Winwallus is very well documented in comparison with his successor at Landévennec, Guénaël.<sup>13</sup>

Guénaël is said (in modern legend) to have travelled with Maglorius to the Channel Islands, and to have evangelized Alderney. There are three early Lives of the second abbot, Guénaël,<sup>14</sup> but none mentions any visit to the islands. There is nothing about any meeting with Maglorius; furthermore, there is no consensus in later accounts about the dates of his life — the latter may be because of uncertainty

about Winwallus' dates, as suggested above.<sup>15</sup> But this saint did, according to these early accounts, travel in a northerly direction from Landévennec. An anecdote of Guénaël's life says that he went off travelling to the British Isles, for either four or (a variant) thirty-four years. The latter would have allowed him time to visit the Channel Islands. For whatever reason, Guénaël left his post as Abbot after serving there for seven years. Taking a dozen or so monks with him, he went to Great Britain and Ireland for a number of years: if thirty-four, for instance, he could quite credibly have come to and stayed in the Channel Islands for long enough to do missionary work. Textually speaking, there is space in the legend for later writers to insert extra adventures (as we shall see happened in the nineteenth century). However, it is very unlikely that he did anything of the kind, as will be demonstrated.

### *Ecclesiastical*

In 1134, Alderney's church was recorded as Notre Dame in the Cathedral register of Coutances. This, distinct from the *Livre Noir* (below), is evidence that the original church of the single parish of Alderney was dedicated to Notre Dame throughout the period we are dealing with.<sup>16</sup>

In the late thirteenth century, a bishops' register known as the *Livre Noir de Coutances* was drawn up,<sup>17</sup> in which neither Alderney nor its church Notre Dame appears.<sup>18</sup> In this 'geographical' arrangement, Guernsey's ten parishes are listed. After the last of these, St Martin de Bellouse, there follow two more island parishes numbered 11 and 12: these are its neighbouring islands of Herm and Sark. They appear as 'Tugual' (without an island name), and 'Serco' (without a church name), making up the total of twelve parishes. The arrangement is referred to as geographical because Sark and Herm are close to Guernsey, in a line so that they can readily be deemed as two extra parishes of Guernsey main island. Alderney is remote from the group, becoming part of what is now the Bailiwick of Guernsey at a later date. It clear that the original *Livre Noir* did not, surprisingly to those who know anything of the modern islands, include the parish of Alderney. The register may originally have omitted Alderney because of an arrangement whereby the island was part-administered by the

Crown. Because the Bishop of Coutances owned half the island at the time,<sup>19</sup> its church and parish would not have formed part of the Jersey or Guernsey deaneries (which is what the register was concerned with) but would be peculiar to the bishop himself. That at least one copy of the *Livre* exists in which Alderney appears by name is evidently because, over the centuries, working copies were updated to reflect the changing state of the Diocese, whatever the original said.

Some time between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries, a copy of the *Livre Noir* was made that included Alderney. Later during this period at least one other copy was made with a line (or simply a few words) missing so that Tugual was misplaced into the parish of Alderney. The later copy or copies had considerable circulation, but are no longer extant. Misrecognition of a Latin capital letter accounts for the transformation of Tugual (or similar) into Vignal, Guernal (or similar). I append an account, summarized from references given in the body of my text, of copies of the *Livre Noir* in question, as they relate to the parishes of Guernsey:

1. In the earliest copy the ten Guernsey parishes are listed, followed by number 11 (Tugual), and 12 (Sark).
2. In a later copy, perhaps made when Alderney became included in the Bailiwick, there are ten Guernsey parishes. These are followed by number 11 (Aurigny, Notre Dame), and 12 (Herm and Sark together). This entry for number 12 reads 'Tugual, de Serco', as if Tugual were Sark's saint.
3. In a corrupted form of the latter, number 11 has become incorrectly conflated with 12, as follows: 11 is (Aurigny) Tugual, and 12 is 'de Cerco'. It can be seen that Alderney was added in such a way that the number of parishes, 12, remained the same. It can also be seen that the copyist omitted the words 'Notre Dame' so that Tugual appeared beside Aurigny in 11th place, as if belonging to it. Tugual was then misread as Vignal (Tugual, Tugnal, Cugnal, Vignal); Vignal was subsequently misread as Guénaël.
4. Another and similar incorrect copy, made after the copy which had Alderney in 11th place, omitted everything but Tugual in the 11th place (Sark remaining in 12th place). Thus Tugual appeared

to belong to Alderney, because Alderney was now assumed to be 11th on the list.

The church on the tiny island of Herm was dedicated to St Tugual, and there is independent evidence that it was so named throughout the period we are dealing with: Brother William Guffart was installed at St Tugual of Herm in 1480. This little church, probably founded in the tenth century and still so named, was dedicated to this saint from an early date. Although it is not clear exactly who he was, the question is immaterial: there is no legend that 'Tugual' ever visited Herm or founded its church.

In the sixteenth century, Notre Dame of Alderney was rededicated to St Anne, which remains its name today. There is no evidence that the church was ever called anything but Notre Dame during the earliest days of its history. In the case of these two names, nobody could argue that Our Lady came personally to found Alderney's first church; nor has anybody argued that Saint Anne did so.<sup>20</sup> De Gerville, who believed with Métivier that Vignalis came to evangelize Alderney, suggests that the Reformation disapproved of the barbarian-sounding Vignal, suppressing him in favour of St Anne. However, the church was never named for the former saint; the likely explanation is that, for the Reformation, a dedication to Notre Dame smacked of Mariolatry, and this was the reason for the change.

### *The Modern Legend*

In Victorian times, there was a revival of interest in island history, partly owing to a number of archaeological discoveries connected with extensive defence-building work in the whole Channel Island area. There was a flurry of activity around local saints in particular. Much of the historical and hagiographical material researched for this study dates from the mid-nineteenth century, as do the documents relating to the Vignalis legend. Newspaper articles by Georges Métivier (described below), in which he refutes de Gerville's 1846 account of Guénaël, were published in 1848; Clarke's legend appeared just three years after that.<sup>21</sup> The story has been presented as traditional in modern times, but the literary sources for the story post-date the original legends by hundreds of years.



The crucial source for Clarke's legend of Saint Vignalis has now been traced to a small volume by Charles de Gerville.<sup>22</sup> He finds that an ancient Register (the *Livre Noir*) lists a name resembling Vignalis in what appears to be the position of the parish of Alderney. Wishing to know who this could have been, he consults a handbook to find an appropriate saint, and he deems that Guénaël (according to his dates listed) would be contemporary with Maglorius.<sup>23</sup> He derives the name Vignal from Guénaël,<sup>24</sup> and writes his account of what he thinks must have happened. It is clear from his style that he is inventing the story (he says 'I suppose', not 'it is supposed'), and thus we can be certain that this is where the modern legend originates.<sup>25</sup> It is overwhelmingly likely that Clarke heard the story of Saint Vignalis of Alderney from de Gerville. She cannot have had it from her other associate Métivier, because he is convinced that Guénaël did not come with Maglorius. Certain inconsistencies in her account indicate that she probably wrote it from a remembered conversation; in any case, she had it at second hand. For example, she spells Landévennec 'Landeven', and she names the saint 'Guernal Vignal' as if not realising that they were versions of the same name.

Métivier is known to have been a friend and colleague of De Gerville's. His anonymous articles in the *Gazette de Guernesey*, first cited above, are reliably attributed to him: his rough copies are kept in the Métivier archive in Guernsey. The articles themselves may also be consulted in Guernsey's Priaux Library; the only other reference to them, beside my own here (to my knowledge), appears in a privately-printed book, generously made available to me by Alderney people.<sup>26</sup>

The first of Métivier's two articles that we are concerned with identifies Vignal with Guénaël, as de Gerville does, and states categorically that he must have come to Alderney because the church was dedicated to him. In his mother-country, in that era (he says), churches were *always* named after their founders: 'c'est un fait.'<sup>27</sup> He too had found a reference to Vignal for Alderney in the *Livre Noir*, but not in the transcription made and used by his colleague de Gerville.<sup>28</sup> Instead, he cites a similar reading in one of the manuscripts of Toustain de Billy, which can be dated to the late seventeenth century.<sup>29</sup> This evidence strengthens the point that Vignal was genuinely believed to belong to Alderney long before Victorian times, and that de Gerville was not spinning his story out of nowhere.

Métivier's second article, however, triumphantly claims 'l'antériorité de l'Eglise d'Auregny'. He says he cannot agree with his learned friend (he means, and cites, de Gerville), that Guénaël came *with* Maglorius. This is because, according to his own research, Guénaël lived much too early to have been Maglorius' contemporary and therefore Alderney must have been evangelized before the other islands were. He gives a different set of dates for the saint, taken from a different source.<sup>30</sup> This means that Métivier cannot be the source for Clarke's legend: de Gerville is her source.

Clarke was friends with the local historians of her day, and she turns their fact-finding into fiction. She thanks three colleagues, in a non-specific manner, in her guide-book: Frederick Williams 'the Scholar of Alderney', F. C. Lukis, and Georges Métivier;<sup>31</sup> but the source for her Vignalis legend has had to be extracted from the little-known documents described here. In 1851 she published her guide-book of Alderney, featuring the story of a saint who came to join Maglorius' mission to the Channel Islands in the sixth century: Maglorius sent him, from Sark, to convert the people of Alderney to Christianity. Clarke's story gives few hagiographical details and no indication of her sources.<sup>32</sup> Her account, so typical of the way legends were invented (in the old sense of 'found', or simply made up) in that period, has persisted in one form or another until this day, although several scholars have questioned it.<sup>33</sup> But, to reinforce the story we are concerned with here, there was a belief, common among antiquarians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that the name of a church infallibly tells us the name of the saint who founded it.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, if Alderney's church was named Saint Vignalis, it was argued, Saint Vignalis must have come to Alderney. The three writers we are dealing with, de Gerville, Métivier, and Clarke, seem to have been unaware that the parish of Alderney was never named 'Vignalis'. This is because the copy of the *Livre Noir* available to them was defective. In fact, according to the earliest records, the island parish of Alderney was named Notre Dame. Therefore we must demonstrate how these nineteenth-century writers came to find a name that was so far from the correct one, and how they explained it in such a way that a legend about Alderney's patron saint was born.

Clarke calls the saint Guernal Vignal; it has now become clear that this meant Guénaël *or* Vignal (latinized to Vignalis).<sup>35</sup> Guénaël

could have visited the islands during his years travelling away from his Abbey; or, let us say, a researcher attempting to identify Alderney's saint guessed that he must have done so. My study has identified that researcher, and demonstrated his research to be the source of Clarke's legend. Next, I demonstrate how and why the name Vignal became the starting point for that research in the first place.

### *The Livre Noir*

What remains to be investigated is why Vignal appears in the *Livre Noir*, as if for Alderney, in spite of the fact that Notre Dame was the name of Alderney's parish until the sixteenth century. The parish was recorded as Notre Dame in the first register of the Cathedral of Coutances (dated 1134);<sup>36</sup> the *Livre Noir* was drawn up in the later thirteenth century. Although Alderney did not appear in the earliest copy of this register, and Alderney's church was dedicated to Notre Dame during the Middle Ages, de Gerville was familiar with a copy that did include Alderney, as explained in my account of changing versions of this document (above). De Gerville quite reasonably took the name Vignal to refer to the parish of Alderney, because in the copy he had before him this name follows immediately after Guernsey's ten on-island parishes and just before the entry for Sark. The register names the parishes without naming the islands,<sup>37</sup> and therefore it is clear that a reader looking down the list, seeing Tugnal or Vignal after Guernsey's last parish and before Sark, would assume that the entry referred to Alderney.

In the 1950s A. H. Ewen surmised almost exactly this, concluding that Tugual must have been misread as Cugnal or Vignal and that 'the entry' referred to Herm. But unfortunately Ewen's findings have been taken to mean that he thought Vignal went to Herm, and several recent guide-books perpetuate the error. In fact Ewen did *not* think Vignal, or Tugual, went to Herm, but his rather terse account is ambiguous: 'If the name CUGNAL is read as TUGUAL, a very possible variant of mediæval script, the entry would clearly refer to Herm ...'. He also says 'it is noteworthy that *Herm* is omitted from the list in the *Livre Noir*, and the scribe could easily have *missed a line* ...' (my emphases). He remarks that Clarke and other writers identified Cugnal with Vignalis, 'who is supposed to have evangelized Alderney',

but he does not explain who first did the supposing. Ewen traces the history of the church of St Mary (Notre Dame), but makes no mention of Alderney being omitted from the *Livre Noir* nor why this should be so. He does not give much further information about the entry; this is largely because, as he says, the copy in question is now lost and therefore nobody can ascertain exactly what it did say.<sup>38</sup>

Some copies which did include Alderney were made, although no date can be established for the first of these. Many copies are still traceable: there are two in the Guernsey archives, two in de Gerville's archive, and at least one among de Billy's MSS. There are a number of descriptive references, to be found in various works of local history, which can be used to identify the changing state of the document or documents. Dupont talks about some error in the *Livre* or in its copies;<sup>39</sup> Falle refers despairingly to copies in Latin and 'old English' and recommends a new collation because of the multiple copies and errors therein.<sup>40</sup> Some copies, as previously described, list the parishes as though following a line on a map: from Guernsey out through Herm and Sark with no mention of Alderney or of Notre Dame. But at least one copy includes Alderney by name: Lecanu gives Notre Dame 'de Bellouse' for Alderney, followed by St 'Vignol' for Sark and Herm together.<sup>41</sup> Duncan refers to this passage, pointing out that 'Bellouse' has nothing to do with Alderney, here placed as the eleventh parish, but belongs with St Martin (Guernsey's tenth parish was indeed called St Martin de Bellouse).<sup>42</sup> This shows that Duncan too had reason to believe that Alderney was included in the list of parishes, and that some copies of the *Livre* included Alderney in what would nowadays be considered its logical place before the smaller islands. The readers who wondered who Vignal was did not realise that 'Vignal' (or 'Cignal') was a wrongly-copied 'Tugual', and could not believe that Alderney would be absent from the list.

The copy that de Gerville saw has indeed been lost, as Ewen avers: it was found to be missing soon after he replaced it on its shelf in the Coutances archive, more than a century and a half ago. The copy that de Billy made is presumably among his papers in France somewhere; we have no way of knowing whether he saw the same exemplar that de Gerville used. Two copies of the Register may be consulted in the Guernsey archive today: one was made by Métivier from de Gerville's copy (number 11, St Vignalis, and number 12, de

Cerco' — that is, Sark without a saint), and the other is a certified transcript, in the Jersey Cartulary, of what is believed to be a correct copy of the original document. The latter gives no numbers, but in the corresponding places it reads 'St Tugualis' (that is, Herm) and 'de Cerco' (Sark, again). Neither mentions Alderney. It seems surprising that the historians de Gerville and Métivier, who must have known about Notre Dame *and* about Tugual of Herm, did not make further enquiries.

## Conclusion

My account of varying copies of the *Livre Noir* explains how it came about that a name, which was ultimately read as Vignalis, appeared to be the patron of Alderney. Nineteenth-century antiquarians, de Gerville in particular, wishing to know more about the history of Alderney and its church, identified Vignal as Guénaël.

It is interesting to note, as of course de Gerville did, that Saint Guénaël could have come to Alderney, although this study has demonstrated that he did not. Whenever it was that he lived, he is indeed reputed to have left his Abbey to go travelling to the British Isles. Accounts vary as to how long he was away, and where he died, but according to some of those accounts it would have been possible for him to stop off in the Channel Islands. An intriguing medieval parallel to this situation is as follows: Wace describes a period, several years of peace, among the adventures of King Arthur in his *Roman de Brut*; Chrétien de Troyes situated his Arthurian romances as if within that space. Two manuscripts of the *Brut* includes these romances in their chronological place, as if the characters were having their adventures in between Arthur's previously-reported wars.<sup>43</sup>

For comparable copying errors or misreadings, first, it is well known that the name Criseyde is based on the name of an unrelated character in the Trojan legend; Chesterton especially calls her a 'walking misquotation' and 'talking typographical error'.<sup>44</sup> A closer example, in the matter of a non-existent saint, is a name that results from the word "sanctuary" being wrongly copied to give 'Sainte Warie' in a fourteenth-century Guide to Confession; the name could perhaps be (although less likely) a corruption of Marie, because there is no

such saint as Warie. However, as far as I can discover, nobody has attempted to create a Warie legend on the basis of this mistake.<sup>45</sup>

I have shown that the nineteenth-century legend of Vignalis was based ultimately on a copying error, and I have traced the error across several hundred years. The resulting figure of 'Saint Vignalis', who could not have been the sixth-century Saint Guénaël, has remained the virtual patron of Alderney for many centuries.

### Summary of Dates and Key Documents

Sixth Century — saints Maglorius (d. c. 575), Winwallus (late c. 5 or c. 6), and Guénaël (c. 6, after Winwallus) flourished. Also known to have flourished in the sixth century are Samson and Tugual.

Ninth Century — most lives of the above saints first written.

914 — Landévennec Abbey sacked by Vikings. Note that, before the Norse invasions, the Channel Islands were as 'Celtic' as any other tiny pieces of land evangelized by Celtic saints.

1134 — Alderney's church recorded as Notre Dame in Cathedral register of Coutances.

Late Thirteenth Century — the *Livre Noir* of Coutances drawn up.

1362 — it is recorded that the king owned the windmill and the bishop owned the watermill: half of Alderney each.

Thirteenth to Seventeenth Centuries — some time during this period a copy of *Livre Noir* was made that included Alderney; at least one other made with a line missing so that Tugual was misplaced into the entry for Alderney. Misrecognition of a Latin capital letter accounts for the change from Tugual to Vignal, Guernal. Relevant copies of the *Livre Noir* as follows:

1. In the earliest copy ten Guernsey parishes are listed, followed by 11 (Tugual), and 12 (Sark).
2. In a later copy ten Guernsey parishes are followed by 11 (Aurigny, Notre Dame), and 12 (Herm and Sark together).
3. In a corrupted form of the latter, 11 has become incorrectly conflated with 12, as follows: 11 (Aurigny) Tugual, and 12 'de Cerco'.
4. Another incorrect copy, made after the copy which had Alderney in 11th place, omits everything but Tugual in 11th place.

1480 — Guffart installed at St Tugual of Herm.

Sixteenth Century — Notre Dame of Alderney rededicated to St Anne.

Late Seventeenth Century — Toustain de Billy reads a copy of the *Livre Noir* in which St Vignal appears to be patron of Alderney.

1734 — Falle refers to multiple, and confusing, copies of the *Livre Noir*.

1846 — de Gerville publishes the seminal account of how the islands were Christianized, identifying 'Vignal' with Guénaël. He has access to a copy of the *Livre Noir* in which this figure appears to be patron of Alderney's church. He and Métivier use different methods for dating events in the early Middle Ages.

1848 — Métivier publishes articles challenging de Gerville's account on the grounds of incompatible dates, although insisting that 'Vignal' must have come to Alderney because of the apparent name of the church. Neither Métivier nor de Gerville mentions the fact that before the Reformation Alderney's church was dedicated not to Vignalis but to Notre Dame.

1851 — Clarke publishes the story that 'Vignalis' was sent by Maglorius from Sark to evangelize Alderney.

Later Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries — de Gerville's book being scarce and little known, efforts were made to discredit the Vignalis legend; these failed to dislodge a notion that Vignalis was somebody identifiable. Some guide-books, for want of a better theory, claimed that Alderney's patron was Winwallus. There is nothing in the sources to support this view: Winwallus could not, even in legend, have visited Alderney. Guénaël could have done so, although it is now known that he did not.

1980s — a small shrine known as Saint Vignalis Garden consecrated in Alderney. An inscription, placed on a wall near the cross, does not identify Vignalis as the saint who came to the island: it dedicates the Garden to missionary saints who brought Christianity in the sixth century.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup>My thanks are due to the people of Alderney, staff and researchers at Priaulx library in Guernsey, Oxford librarians, and many friends and colleagues for their help and advice.



<sup>9</sup>An early version of this article appeared in *Alderney Society Bulletin*, XL (2005); it lacks its final footnote (although present in my text as supplied), which refers to Charles de Gerville, *Recherches sur les îles du Cotentin* (Valognes, Gomont, 1846). A condensed version, in *Review of the Guernsey Society*, LXII. 3 (2006–7), refers to the *Bulletin* article above, with correct volume number but year incorrectly as 2006. Both articles are mentioned in ‘Publications Reçues’, *Analecta Bollandiana* 125.1 (June 2007), p. 238, but incorrectly headed *Winwaloeus* (first abbot of Landevennec; we are concerned with Guénaël, second abbot). The present article has been extensively revised, and local anecdotes removed, for a wider scholarly audience; the information here given about its previous publishing history makes clear that this material merits a place in a widely-available and reliable scholarly journal.

<sup>10</sup>See below.

<sup>11</sup>Clarke, *The Alderney Guide* (Guernsey, Brouard, 1851), pp. 54–5.

<sup>12</sup>Dates and other preliminary information for four of these five saints are in D. H. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 3rd edn. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992). For Tugal see ‘Tudwal’; Guénaël is not listed. Further hagiographical references are given below.

<sup>13</sup>See William Smith and Henry Wace, *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, 4 vols (London, J. Murray, 1887); Michael Lapidge and Richard Sharpe, *Bibliography of Celtic/Latin Literature 400–1200* (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1985; p. 255). See also François Duine, *Memento des sources hagiographiques de l'histoire* (Rennes, Bihon-Rault, 1918), for several saints of the period in question.

<sup>14</sup>See, for example, Philip Falle, *An Account of the Island of Jersey*, rev. edn. (Jersey, Richard Giffard, 1837), p. 178.

<sup>15</sup>See *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*.

<sup>16</sup>[Black’s Guide Books], *Guernsey, Herm, Sark, Alderney* (London, A & C Black, 1902), pp. 91–3; the 1892 edition contains a similar entry, but the 1881 edition does not.

<sup>17</sup>See esp. François Morvannou, ‘Guénolé et Guénaël’, *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l’ouest*, 81.1 (1974): 25–42. Morvannou went on to write a book about Guénaël, but it contains nothing about the Channel Islands: a mention in the article just cited, that the saint was known as Vignol in Jersey (sic), is omitted from the book without further explanation.

<sup>18</sup>See notes above, for the latter’s dates.

<sup>19</sup>According to Malo Joseph de Garaby, *Vies des bienheureux et des saints* (St-Brieuc, Prud’homme, 1839); and Albert le Grand, *Les Vies des Saints de la Bretagne Armorique*, 5th edn. (Quimper, J. Salaun, 1901), Winwallus lived during the fifth century, although annotations to the latter judge that his successor was a contemporary of Maglorius. His death is put anywhere between 504 (Georges Métivier, ‘Souvenirs Historiques de Guernesey, Livre Second, ch. IX; ch. X’, *Gazette de Guernesey*, 7 & 9, Feb 12 & Feb 26, 1848), and 538 (Jo Wilde, *Saints Alive*, Alderney, Steven Banks, 1991).

<sup>20</sup>Black (in his Guide Book) cites Smith and Wace, *Dictionary* (vol. iv, p. 1191). See also, inter al, a comprehensive account in Gilbert H. Doble, *The Saints of Cornwall*, 4 vols. (Oxford, Holywell Press, 1962); and a Latin life in Arthur de la Borderie, *Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Landevennec* (Rennes, Société archéologique du Finistère, 1888). There is a full-length book about him by Joseph le Jollec, *Guénolé, le saint de Landevennec: vie, oeuvre, culte* (Quimper, Roz-Avel, 1952), but it contains a number of avoidable errors.

<sup>21</sup>These are to be found in: *Acta Sanctorum*, ed. Bollandists (from 17th century); November (3rd) vol. 1, vita ii, ed. P. de Smedt; 669–79; Hughes Ménard [Menardus], *Martyrologium Sanctorum* (Paris, Germont & Billaine, 1629); le Grand, *Les Vies des Saints* – all editions of the latter give an account of the saint, collated from the remaining (unpublished) Life. The annotations, by ‘Thomas’, contradict the account of the saint’s dates in the main body of the work. A mention of Guénaël’s visit to the islands, citing M. de la Borderie, in fact refers to the latter’s *Histoire de la Bretagne*, 3 vols. (Rennes, Plihon & Hervé, 1896–7, vol. i, pp. 453–5),



although Thomas does not say so. De la Borderie took the mention of this visit from de Gerville's *Recherches*.

<sup>14</sup>See below for references to Dantine, who gives one set of dates; and to Gallet (corr. Morice), who gives another.

<sup>15</sup>See Gustave Dupont, *Histoire du Cotentin et de ses Îles*, 4 vols. (Caen, Le Blanc-Hardel, 1870, 1873), vol. 1, p. 472.

<sup>16</sup>It was called 'Noir' because of the dark colour of its parchment binding. In this section I trace what is known about differing copies of the register; later I describe the way these copies were understood and used by historians.

<sup>17</sup>This may be ascertained from the certified modern transcript in Jersey.

<sup>18</sup>See, for example, Robin Whicker, 'History and Archaeology Report', *Alderney Society Bulletin*, XL (2005), p. 20: in 1362 the king owned the windmill and the bishop owned the watermill.

<sup>19</sup>For this theory, about church dedication, see Métivier's argument below (and reference to *Mona Antiqua*).

<sup>20</sup>See the following for Clarke, Métivier, and de Gerville, general and historical context (all accessed 9.10.13):

<http://www.priaulxlibrary.co.uk/priaulx-library-new-details2.asp?ItemID=86>

<http://www.priaulxlibrary.co.uk/priaulx-library-new-details2.asp?ItemID=96>

<http://www.inha.fr/spip.php?article2338>

<sup>21</sup>de Gerville, *Recherches*. Because the book is not listed among de Gerville's publications in the web-page cited above, and because it is described as 'rare et peu connu' (de la Borderie, Duine, et al., *Lives of Breton Saints*, Rennes, Plihon & Hervé, 1891, in 'Miracles de S Magloire'), I have deposited copies at the Alderney Society Museum and the Priaulx Library in Guernsey; the microfiche, supplied by the Bibliothèque Nationale, remains in Oxford's Taylor Institution. De Gerville is best known as the father of modern archaeology, and his *Voyage* (cited below) is still considered an important work of reference.

<sup>22</sup>Maur François Dantine, et al., *L'art de vérifier les dates*, 2nd edn. (Paris, Desprez, 1770), p. 158. It is important to consult this second edition, the only one to contain the information that de Gerville cites.

<sup>23</sup>Modern experts do not accept this derivation (I thank M. Tanguy in particular for his advice), but it is clear that de Gerville did, which is what matters here.

<sup>24</sup>I traced de Gerville's book from references in Kellett-Smith's unpublished work on the history of Herm, from the *Gazette* articles described below, and from de la Borderie's *Histoire*.

<sup>25</sup>Wilde, *Saints Alive*. Copies of the relevant chapter of this book, and the parish magazine article from which it was taken, have been deposited at the Alderney Museum and at Priaulx in Guernsey.

<sup>26</sup>He cites, *inter al*, the first edition of Henry Rowlands, *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* (1723; 2nd edn. repr. London, J. Knox, 1766), which contains a passage about early 'bishops' who travelled to found churches, leaving their name and a disciple or two for each (pp. 149ff. in this edition). So, 'n'en doutons point' says Métivier, it happened in Alderney.

<sup>27</sup>Métivier must have seen de Gerville's copy at some point: he made his own copy, now in the Guernsey archives, from it.

<sup>28</sup>Much of de Billy's work remains unpublished, but much can be gleaned from his *Histoire Ecclesiastique du Diocèse de Coutances*, 3 vols. (Rouen, Société de l'histoire de Normandie, 1874–80); and from introductory editorial material in de Gerville's *Voyage archéologique dans la Manche*, 5 vols. (1818–20; repr. St-Lô, Société d'archéologie et d'histoire de la Manche, 1999–2002). One of de Billy's editors, Dolbet, was de Gerville's great-nephew, and he drew up the list of his kinsman's manuscripts that appears in the latter work. De Billy's research is cited by at least three of the historians consulted for my study: because they needed access to this unpublished material they had to get portions of his MSS copied by hand.

<sup>30</sup>Métivier cites 'Gallet, col. 695'; this reference is actually to be found in Hyacinthe Morice, *Histoire ecclesiastique et civile de Bretagne*, 2 vols. (1750–6; repr. Westmead, Gregg International, 1968). Nowadays Métivier's date for Guénaël is considered more credible than de Gerville's, but at that time the latter was believed, and built upon.

<sup>31</sup>I have found nothing published by the first (Greffier of Alderney, he died in 1851); the second published nothing about Early Christianity (he provided Clarke with material for her section on Antiquities); the third published the newspaper articles here discussed.

<sup>32</sup>The *Legend* was also published separately (Guernsey, Brouard, 1851); here is a sample of the author's prose: '... never more was the island shunned as the haunt of dangerous men. Ere the summer had passed away, a Holy House had arisen beside the Cross of St. Vignal; and when the autumn harvest had gathered richly in, the first Bishop came from Sercq to consecrate the Church of St. Vignal for the early Christians of Alderney.'

<sup>33</sup>For example, Ewen (below).

<sup>34</sup>See my reference to *Mona Antiqua*, above.

<sup>35</sup>See above, for what is known of Guénaël. My examination of the *Livre Noir*, below, will make clear how this name came to be where she found it.

<sup>36</sup>Dupont, *Histoire* (cited above). It is curious that Dupont found a copy of the Cathedral document among the MSS of de Gerville himself; this means that De Gerville must have known about Notre Dame, but as far as I am aware he never mentions it.

<sup>37</sup>The exception in the list is Sark, which has no other name (of church or saint) in any of the copies I have examined.

<sup>38</sup>See A. H. Ewen, 'The Town of St Anne, Alderney', *Transactions of La Société Guernesiaise* (1954–8): 329–53 (p. 333, and passim).

<sup>39</sup>Dupont, *Histoire*, gives an account of the *Livre* in vol. ii, pp. 60–5.

<sup>40</sup>Falle, *An Account of the Island of Jersey* (pp. 187–91). This 1837 edition is based on the 1734 version Falle made when he was an old man, which means that varying copies were proliferating long before de Gerville's day.

<sup>41</sup>*Histoire des Evêques de Coutances* (Coutances, Voisin et cie, 1839), pp. 445–7. The passage reads '[for the 11th parish] Bellouse, ou Notre-Dame d'Aurigny; [for the 12th] Saint-Vignol, c'est-à-dire les îles de Serck et de Herms' (Lecanu adds further information about the *Livre Noir*).

<sup>42</sup>*History of Guernsey* (London, Longman, 1841), p. 326. Duncan is right about Bellouse, but a typographical error gives the Lecanu reference wrongly as p. 466 (see previous note).

<sup>43</sup>See Wace's *Roman de Brut*, ed. and trans. Judith Weiss (1999; repr. Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 2002); and Simon Gaunt, *Retelling the Tale: An Introduction to Medieval French Literature* (London, Duckworth, 2001), p. 72. It is an apt coincidence that Wace was a Jerseyman, which gives a medieval Channel Island connection in the context of this study. I am grateful to Judith Weiss for confirming that the manuscripts H and K are in question.

<sup>44</sup>G. K. Chesterton, *Chaucer* (London, Faber & Faber, 1932), pp. 142–3.

<sup>45</sup>See 'Cher Alme': *Texts of Anglo-Norman Piety*, ed. Tony Hunt, trans. Jane Bliss, Introduction by Henrietta Leyser (FRETs OPS 1; Tempe AZ, ACRMS, 2010), pp. 287 & 289.